

After Action Report

126 (TAC 12) – Commando Schenke

Date Played: 09 Jul 2006

- Notes -

Played via VASL.

Russian Player: Mark Dinius

Advantages: Defensive Terrain, Fortified Building Locations, Time

Disadvantages: Leadership, ELR

German Player: Will Fleming

Advantages: Assault engineers, smoke, FT, DC, leadership, deployment.

Disadvantages: Assaulting fortified building. Somewhat difficult VC.

- Initial Thoughts -

German: Mark and I both haven't played for a while, so we are looking at this as more of a warm up types scenario. I played it once before as A80 and with some good dice rolls, I had no trouble meeting the VC as the Germans. With the release of Beyond Valor 3rd Edition, the conditions have gotten tougher for the Germans who must face an extra Russian squad and have their sniper value reduced. Nothing huge, but it might just be enough to balance this sucker out.

The assault engineers will drive the attack with their excellent firepower and toys. They also will be able to make the street crossings easier with liberal use of smoke so the bulk of the work will be up to them. I hope to have a few DC and at least one FT left for the final assault on building X4. With luck, I can isolate some Russians before they can drop back to support the main group in a big hedgehog type defense. I hope to be attacking X4 in force by turn 5. That will give me 2.5 turns to mop up the resistance.

Cutting retreat paths and keeping the Russians under DM will be critical. With +4 TEM in the fortified locations, I will need to bring a decent amount of firepower. Good thing is that I have just the boys for the job.

I gave Mark the choice on sides and I was a bit surprised that he chose the Russians. Not that they can't win, but I think the Germans will be a lot more fun to play with their ample firepower. The Russians will have a difficult time finding the firepower to break Germans unless they are out in the street.

Russian: We were looking for a quick small board play for VASL, but it's always hard to find a scenarios that Will hasn't played. Even though Will has played A80, we went with Commando Schenke. I decided to take the Russians in this scenario as I know Will enjoys the Germans, especially when they have assault engineers and some nice toys. Plus, I have gotten used to playing the Russians after playing RBIII, so taking the Russians was an easy choice for me.

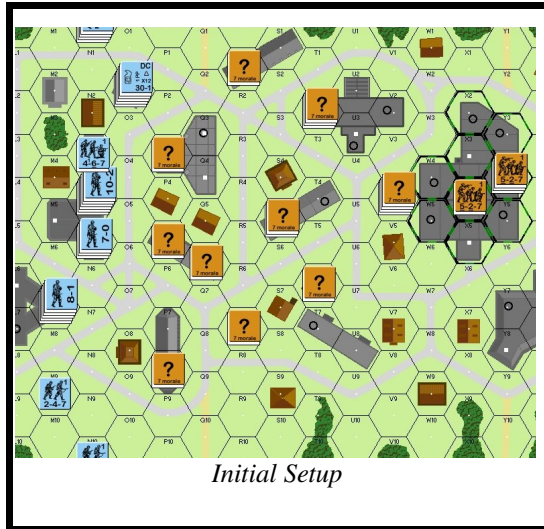
I'm expecting a strong thrust from the Germans through the middle of the board with a flurry of half squads and smoke. There is a lot of open ground the Germans have to cross to get from building to building, but with his assault engineers laying down smoke, I'm not expecting to get too many good open ground shots. I'll have to maximize on my opportunities as the Russians don't have enough firepower and leadership to take out the German squads in the buildings. The lack of leadership for the Russians will make morale checks very important outside the fortified building.

One of my goals will be to hold onto the U2 building as long as possible and limit his attack to the middle of the board. This building, in my opinion, represents the best staging point for the Germans to make their assault on the X4 building. If I can keep him out of the U2 building and the Y7 building, I can isolate his attack in the middle of the board and hopefully slow down his assault onto the X4 building. The other goal will be to make the Germans use their flamethrowers as much as possible while they make their way to the X4 building. It will be nice if at least one of the flamethrowers are gone by the time the Germans launch their attack on the fortified building. Flamethrowers are nice tools in clearing out fortified locations, so hopefully I won't have to face too many flamethrower attacks in the X4 building.

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- Setup -



German: I setup with a MG stack and the 9-1 in the woods in N0. This location is able to sweep a long boulevard clean of any retreating Russians and can put quick pressure on the VC building area and building U3, which I consider as an excellent jumping off point for getting into X4. With luck, they will be able to reduce Russian resistance in that area and move up to pressure X4 from the West. I will need to pretty much surround the building if I want it to fall.

The pioneers setup to hit hard up the middle and to wipe out any Russian squads in the central area before getting to the X4 area. There looks to be a few Russian squads in that area supported on the flanks, so their smoke and morale will be needed if I want to put the pressure on early.

To the East, I have my secondary forces who will try to keep the pressure on that section and hopefully get to P7 in good shape. If I can get a squad there on the first turn, it will cut off a lot of his route options. Prisoners and lots of them would be a very good thing for me.

Once I locate his leaders, they will get the bulk of my attention. If I can eliminate them or keep them broken, it will be hard for Mark to keep enough Russians good order to stop my advance.

Russian: The Russians have to set up at least 6 squads on/south of hex row U, so that will leave some squads pretty isolated on the front line. I didn't want to set up too many squads near the German advance, so I setup some dummy counters in P5, P8 and Q6.

I set up my MMG and LMG in V4 to lay down fire lanes down the roads to prevent Germans from trying to cross the roads and keep his attack isolated to the middle of the board. Also, I set up a squad with a LMG to lay down fire lanes to either the East or West in the event the Germans tried to make a daring flanking move against the Russian setup.

I decided to put my 8-1 leader in T2 along with a couple of squads. The U2 building will be the rallying point for the neighboring squads in their attempt to hold onto the U2 building as long as possible.

I exchanged my other leader for a commissar, so I am planning on the commissar to be able to rally any troops within the X4 building. Keeping the Commissar safe and out of the firefight will be important for the Russians to win the scenario.

- Turn 1 -

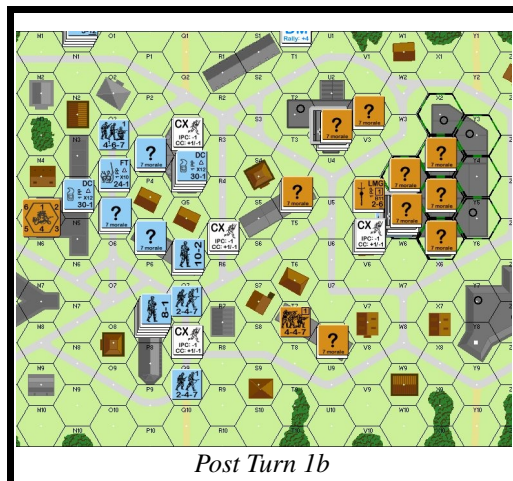


German: Mark disappointed me by having mostly dummies in my path. I was really hoping to catch a lot of units before they could get back to X4 and make their final stand. It turned out that only one squad was opposing my in P3, but he took an early DC and I was able to gobble up a lot of ground quickly. As you can see, I was moving ahead with the bulk of my forces early on. The only notable exceptions were the FT units who had laid down smoke to support the advance of my other units.

I was happy to gain P7 without much difficulty and planned to start cutting off retreat paths for any Russians I found. Since all of Mark's dummies were found early, that left only good order units for the few remaining locations outside the X4 complex.

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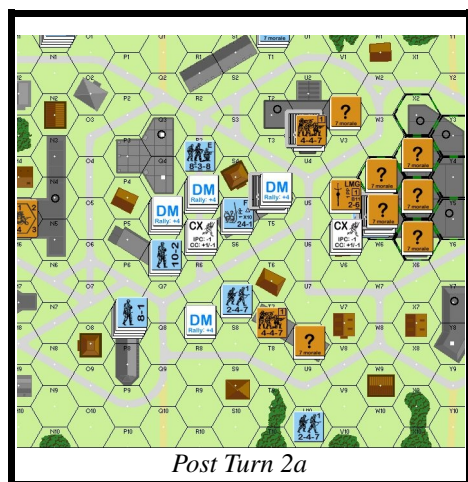
Russian: The Russian defense had an inauspicious start as I broke my MMG on my first defensive fire of the game with a 12. I fixed the MMG in the Russian 1 Player turn, so maybe it was good to get rid of some of those bad rolls at the start of the game.

The Germans advanced through my walls of dummy counters. I ended up breaking an 8-3-8 assault engineer with the squad before he broke from a German DC. The squad was later captured as his rout path was cut off in the building. The Germans also broke 1 of my squads in R1. However, exchanging broken squads for broken squads doesn't help the Russian cause. The Germans have the luxury of being able to rally their squads and get them back on the front line. A luxury which the Russians do not have.

I wanted to keep my concealment as long as I could and stay out of the LOS of his kill stacks for my troops on the front line, so the Russian troops were in a slight fall back defensive mode. Simply breaking the Russian squads were in a slight fall back defensive mode. Simply breaking the Russian squads was just about as good as killing them given the lack of leadership and rout paths back to the X4 building.

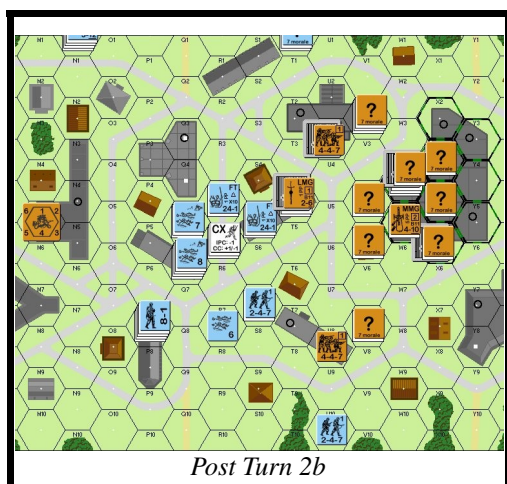
Turn 1 didn't really have an big surprises for me and probably for Will as well.

- Turn 2 -



German: After my turn 2, I was feeling pretty good. I was up to the S5 building area and had lost fairly few of my troops. I would then be able to put pressure on U3 and begin to bring my MG stacks up to support the final assault.

I did lose a HS due to carelessness in my turn when I could have dashed. I also was forced to risk a pair of 2 flat residual firepower attacks because I ran forward a bit too far and got one of my units broken in a bad spot. A Russian in T4 was going to force a German squad to surrender if I didn't break him first, so I risked the residual shots on my FT in order to have a good chance of breaking him. I also tossed a DC in T4 just to make sure that it or the FT would break the Russian squad and allow my broken unit in S4 to route. The DC worked, so I was able to hold my FT fire for later.



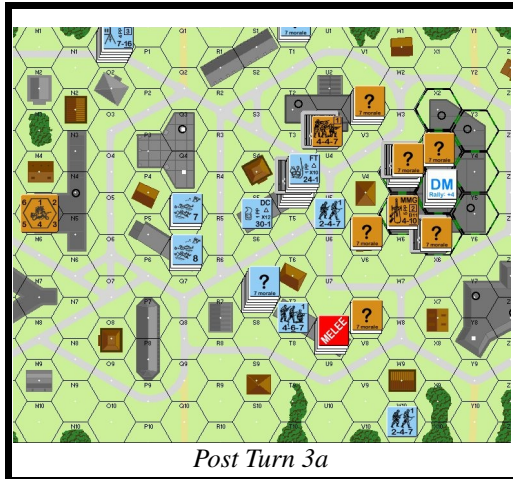
Russian: Turn 2 saw the Germans continue their assault forward. I failed to take a shot at a German 4-6-7 with my MMG that was trying to get up to my broken unit in T0. Due to my failure, the squad made it up and forced my broken unit to surrender.

I ended up losing another squad in T4 to a German DC after he broke and surrendered due to no rout path. Thus, through the first 2 turns, I had lost 3 full squads to the Germans only losing 1 half squad. There were some broken German units, but they would be back in the fighting before too long. At this point, I wasn't quite sure on how things were going to play out for the Russians the rest of the scenario. Turn 3 would probably see the beginning of an assault on the U2 building from the Germans.

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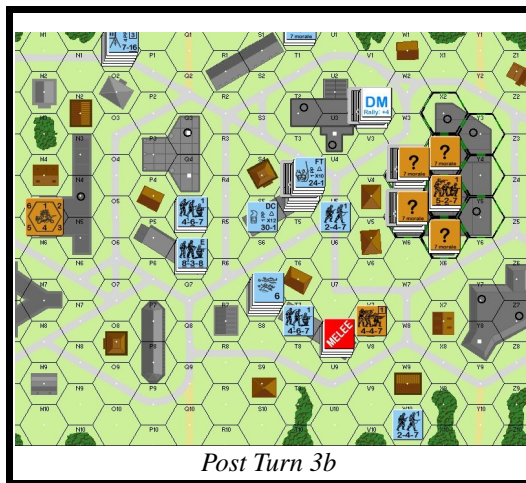
- Turn 3 -



German: Turn 3 didn't really feel right for me...I was starting to lose a bit of my confidence at this point. I wasn't happy with my progress on the U3 building and was worried I might get bottled up in the center of the board, unable to drive forward due to crappy route paths. Germans are not meant to surrender at this point in the war.

I still pushed ahead with my plan. At least I was on pace with it.

Later on in Mark's turn, I was able to CR the squad that I was in CC with, making my work on the right a bit easier. I lost a FT this turn taking some shots at U3, but was unable to begin wearing down the U3 defenders.

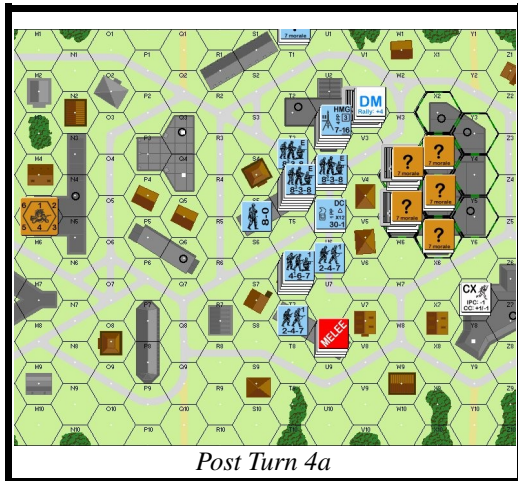


Russian: Turn 3 saw one of my squads in the U2 building break. But the Germans did end up losing one of their flamethrowers. I also lost a half squad in the melee in U8 due to Casual Reduction. But the Germans were still not in the U2 building. Hopefully, my squads could hold out for another turn or 2 before it fell into German hands. I felt better after the 3rd turn than after the second turn for sure. I felt like I could hold out with my commissar and concealment in the X4 building for at least 2 turns as he tried to mop up the building and there really wasn't any pressure yet on the X4 building. The previously broken German squads were all good order again, and they would be back in the fight shortly. Time is on the Russian side. I just need to rally my squad in the U2 building to keep up the resistance.

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- Turn 4 -

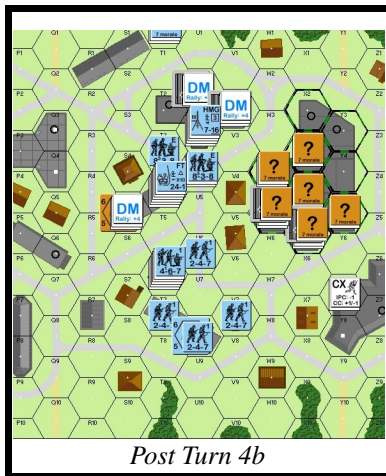


German: Mark left the back door to building U3 open which allowed my MG stack to move up and get into a good position to finish off the defenses there and to start putting some pressure on the X4 building area from the left. Maybe he didn't feel like he had the troops to spare, but I thought it might be worth it to have covered the back door by moving a squad to T2.

At this point, I began to relax a bit. This is where I wanted to be with the bulk of my forces, some toys and three turns to wear down the remaining defenders. I moved fairly aggressively and put good units in the streets to force Mark to drop some of his hard earned concealment.

I figured it would not be easy, but I was confident that I was in a good position to make my final assault. A few good die rolls for me or some bad ones for Mark and I would be able to make an opening in which to drive my pioneers. Other than the FT, no major losses at this point.

During his turn, Mark wasted his only snakes on a morale check for his 8-1 who subsequently disrupted on the HoB roll. U3 was firmly in my control at this point and just had to be mopped up.

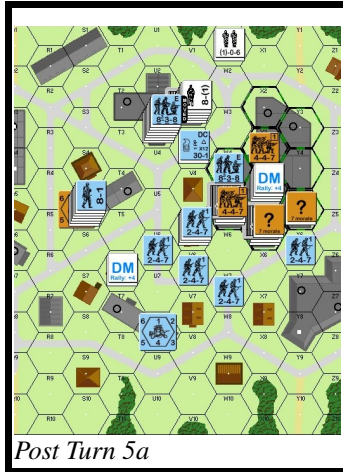


Russian: Turn 4 saw the U2 building fall into German hands as my leader and squad were broken. I rolled a snakes on a morale check with my 8-1 leader and followed that roll up with an 11 on my heat of battle roll, forcing my leader to disrupt and surrender to the Germans. Will then followed my snakes with a sniper roll that eliminated my half squad in the melee in U8. I did manage to take out one of the 8-0 leaders with a sniper shot of my own, but Turn 4 saw the U2 building on the east side of the board fall and my limited defense on the west side collapse as well. Looks like my commissar will be busy rallying troops in the X4 building the rest of the game.

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- Turn 5 -



German: On this turn, the first crack in the defenses was found due to forcing some shots by attempting to drop a DC into W4. The resulting defensive fire broke my unit placing the DC, but the pioneer in the street with him was able to remain in good order. Once revealed, I was able to paste the Russian with good advancing fire including a shot from my FT. I figured the 8-3-8 in fortified locations would be tough to force back. This proved to be all too true.

Looking back, I should probably have been a bit more aggressive and moved more troops into the streets to really put pressure on Mark. I figured that he would fight, but he skulked back for the most part, which was pretty effective in the end. A big blast into my stack in V5 took 3 units out and due to lack of a good rally spot, they never returned to the action.

During his turn, Mark withdrew further into the building making my assault a lot easier since I was not going to take any major shots in the streets. Mark seemed to match my lack of aggressiveness at this point. Both of us were looking at this as going down to the last turn.

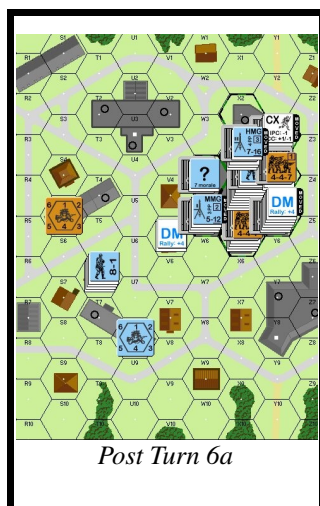


Russian: Turn 5 saw the Germans advance into the X4 building. A flamethrower shot broke my commissar and 2 ½ of my squads, which routed to the 1st floor of X4. In the Russian turn, I decided to advance to the 1st floor of the building. There were too many half squads on the west side of the building and there were too many openings into the building on the east side. The only problem was that my squads were pretty concentrated in the X4 building.

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– - Turn 6 -



German: Turn 6 saw the dice get really hot for both sides. Mark got 4 out of 5 attacks as 3's, but I countered with a few good morale check rolls, so the damage was limited. This turn also saw my 10-2 roll a snakes and battle harden to a heroic 10-3! Those leaders are just the right kind of men to conduct assaults like this.

I moved into the X4 building in force and hit Mark with some heavy advancing fire. The commissar and his friends broke on the second 3MC result and the tide was definitely shifting to the Germans.

During the Russian turn, I was able to take Mark's last shot 24 (+3/4) in stride due to the leader being heroic and shrugging off a pin. With no effective prep fire, Mark was forced to take the brunt of my firepower which turned out to be just too much. The last blast was a 2KIA from the FT that ensured victory as there were no unbroken Russians left on the map.

Russian: At the start of the 6th turn, I had 6 good order squads, 1 half squad and a commissar in the X4 building. Unfortunately, my squads were concentrated within a couple of locations, making for some concentrated attacks by the Germans. Will countered my good dice roll attacks with his own morale checks and eventually, the remaining Russian defense succumbed to the heavy firepower of the Germans. I didn't quite expect to see 6 ½ squads go down so easily in that 6th turn, and had expected to have at least a desperation chance in the final turn. Just too much firepower from the Germans.

- Results -

German: This is a good paced scenario that works very well with VASL. I was able to keep the whole map on screen and it played very quickly. The only problems were dealing with the big stacks in the X4 building at the end.

The Germans are a lot more fun to play in this one and I think that is probably still pro-German, but it has a much more balanced feel now. MMP has generally been doing a good job in re-balancing some oldies by making slight changes. They might consider making the Russian sniper a 5. That would slow the Germans down some with Pins/Broken Units and maybe a leader or two. It would also give the Russians a way to hit the German stacks in buildings. As it stands now, the Russians must fight point blank in order to have a good chance of breaking Germans in the buildings.

Russian: We hadn't played in awhile, so this was a nice quick scenario to get the rust away. The dice were pretty even on both sides and it was nice to see a scenario won with better tactics rather than better dice. Will is always a tough person to beat, and I thought after the 3rd turn, that I might have a chance to steal one from Will. But in the end, Will always seems to find a way to win.

As I looked back at my goals, I thought I did a decent job of isolated his initial attack to the middle of the board and keep him out of the U2 building, but I think I didn't get the kill shots I needed to slow the German advance, and didn't make him make enough shots with his flamethrowers on his way to the building. I know with the Russian units and their lack of leadership, that simply breaking them is enough to remove them from the game. I didn't expect my defense to fold so quickly in the 6th turn as well given that I still had 6 ½ squads left in the X4 building.